



U.S. Department of Justice

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MEDIA RELEASE

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**NEW ENGLAND ORGANIZED CRIME
DRUG ENFORCEMENT TASK FORCE ("OCDEF")**

**NUMEROUS LAKES REGION AND MASSACHUSETTS DEFENDANTS
CONVICTED OF
FEDERAL DRUG TRAFFICKING AND WEAPONS CHARGES**

CONCORD, NEW HAMPSHIRE: United States Attorney Tom Colantuono, Drug Enforcement Administration Special Agent in Charge of the Boston Field Division Mark R. Trouville, New Hampshire Attorney General Peter W. Heed, New Hampshire Drug Task Force Chairman William Fenniman, New Hampshire State Police Colonel Frederick Booth, United States Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives Special Agent in Charge of the Boston Field Division William J. Hoover, and Belmont Police Chief Vinnie Baiocchetti, announced that seventeen individuals from New Hampshire, Massachusetts, and Colombia have been recently convicted in U.S. District Court of federal narcotics trafficking and weapons charges arising from a multi-agency investigation conducted under the auspices of the New England Organized Crime Drug Enforcement Task Force.

The convictions were the result of a two-year investigation conducted by the Drug Enforcement Administration, the New Hampshire Attorney General's Drug Task Force, the New Hampshire State Police, and the U.S. Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives, with assistance from the Belmont, New Hampshire Police Department. The investigation, which centered around the cocaine and methamphetamine trafficking activities of Philip PUOPOLO of Belmont, New Hampshire, and included a month-long wiretap of Puopolo's cellular telephone, effectively dismantled a cocaine trafficking organization which had imported over a kilogram of cocaine per month into New Hampshire from a Massachusetts-based Colombian drug ring over the past several years. During the investigation, undercover investigators purchased multi-ounce quantities of cocaine from participants in the conspiracy, executed search warrants at locations in Belmont, Laconia and Gilmanton Iron Works, seized over thirty firearms including handguns, rifles, and shotguns, and seized and forfeited over \$125,000 in cash, a 2000 custom-built motorcycle, and real estate in Belmont and Gilmanton Iron Works, New Hampshire, the equity in which is valued at over \$100,000.

The following individuals, most of whom were arrested in November, 2003, have been arrested and charged or convicted in United States District Court:

- **Philip PUOPOLO**, 45, of Belmont, New Hampshire, was convicted on May 17, 2004, of conspiracy to distribute over 5 kilograms of cocaine and a quantity of methamphetamine, and of being a drug user in possession of firearms and ammunition. He is on pre-sentence release pending his August 26, 2004 sentencing hearing. He faces a maximum of 40 years' imprisonment;
- **Juan MELGUIZO**, 38, of Chelsea, Massachusetts, a Colombian national and one of Puopolo's sources of supply for cocaine, was convicted on April 22, 2004, of conspiracy to distribute over 5 kilograms of cocaine. He was detained without bail pending his July 27, 2004, sentencing hearing. He faces a minimum of 10, and a maximum of 40 years' imprisonment;
- **Narcizo ZARATE**, 31, of Revere, Massachusetts, a Colombian national and one of Puopolo's sources of supply for cocaine, was convicted on April 15, 2004, of conspiracy to distribute between ½ and 2 kilograms of cocaine. He was detained without bail pending his July 23, 2004, sentencing hearing. He faces a maximum of 20 years' imprisonment;
- **Joseph BAUMANN**, 36, of Gilmanton Iron Works, a methamphetamine and cocaine customer of Puopolo and a sometime cocaine supplier to Puopolo, was convicted on March 23, 2004 of possession with intent to distribute between ½ and 2 kilos of cocaine and possession of counterfeit instruments. He was released under behavioral conditions to be monitored by the U.S. Department of Probation pending his June 23, 2004, sentencing hearing. He faces a maximum of 20 years' imprisonment;
- **Darcy FOSS**, 35, of Saugus, Massachusetts, a source of cocaine supply for Puopolo, was convicted on March 18, 2004, of possession with intent to distribute cocaine. She is detained without bail pending her June 17, 2004 sentencing. She faces a maximum 30 years' imprisonment;
- **Brian JORDAN**, 46, of Center Harbor, New Hampshire, a cocaine customer who sometimes assisted Puopolo in transporting cocaine from Massachusetts into New Hampshire, was convicted on March 11, 2004, of possession with intent to distribute cocaine. He is on pre-sentence release under behavioral conditions monitored by the U.S. Department of Probation pending his June 14, 2004, sentencing hearing. He faces a maximum of 20 years' imprisonment;
- **Peter VERRILL**, 27, of Laconia, New Hampshire, was convicted on March 18, 2004, of possession with intent to distribute between ½ and 2 kilos cocaine. He is on pre-sentence release under behavioral conditions monitored by the U.S.

Department of Probation pending his June 18, 2004, sentencing hearing. He faces a maximum of 20 years' imprisonment;

- **Samuel VERRILL**, 37, of Meredith, New Hampshire, a cocaine customer who sometimes assisted Puopolo in transporting cocaine from Massachusetts into New Hampshire, was convicted on March 12, 2004, of possession with intent to distribute cocaine. He was detained pending his June 30, 2004, sentencing hearing. He faces a maximum of 20 years' imprisonment;
- **Gordon POTTER, Sr.**, 47, of Meredith, New Hampshire, was convicted on March 18, 2004, of attempted possession with intent to distribute one ounce (28 grams) of cocaine. He has been detained without bail since he violated the conditions of his release on bail on January 15, 2004, and on May 20, 2004, was sentenced to 10 months imprisonment, plus three years of supervised release, during which he will be subject to behavioral conditions under the supervision of the U.S. Department of Probation;
- **Scott ALATI**, 39, of Franklin, New Hampshire, was convicted on April 5, 2004, of possession with intent to distribute between ½ and 2 kilos cocaine. He is on pre-sentence release under behavioral conditions monitored by the U.S. Department of Probation pending his July 22, 2004, sentencing hearing. Alati faces a maximum 20 years' imprisonment;
- **Martha VIOLETTE**, 29, of Laconia, New Hampshire, a cocaine customer of and methamphetamine source of supply to Puopolo, was convicted on March 18, 2004, of possession with intent to distribute methamphetamine and cocaine. She is on pre-sentence release under behavioral conditions monitored by the U.S. Department of Probation pending her June 17, 2004, sentencing hearing. She faces a maximum 20 years' imprisonment;
- **Kennard LANG**, 55, of Laconia, New Hampshire, was convicted on May 18, 2004, of using a communications facility (telephone) to facilitate drug trafficking. He was detained without bail pending his September 1, 2004, sentencing hearing. He faces a maximum 4 years' imprisonment;
- **Kathleen GILLIGAN**, 32, of Gilmanton Iron Works, New Hampshire, was convicted on March 16, 2004, of using a communications facility (telephone) to facilitate drug trafficking. She is on pre-sentence release under behavioral conditions monitored by the U.S. Department of Probation pending her June 16, 2004, sentencing hearing. She faces a maximum 4 years' imprisonment;
- **William WALKER**, 46, of Laconia, New Hampshire, was convicted on March 18, 2004, of using a communications facility (telephone) to facilitate drug trafficking. He is on pre-sentence release under behavioral conditions monitored

by the U.S. Department of Probation pending his June 16, 2004, sentencing hearing. He faces a maximum 4 years' imprisonment;

- **Philip WOLFSON**, 42, of Plymouth, New Hampshire, was convicted on March 16, 2004, of being a drug user in possession of a firearm. He is detained pending his sentencing of July 19, 2004. He faces a maximum of ten years' imprisonment;
- **George ARCHAMBAULT**, 45, of Center Harbor, New Hampshire, was convicted on March 4, 2004, of being a drug user in possession of a firearm. On June 1, 2004, he was sentenced to 2 years probation, during which he will be subject to behavioral conditions under the supervision of the U.S. Department of Probation, and fined \$500;
- **Gregory POTTER**, 22, of Meredith, New Hampshire, was convicted on February 20, 2004, of attempted simple possession of cocaine, a misdemeanor. He was detained for over four months without bail since he violated the conditions of his release on bail on January 15, 2004. On May 21, 2004, he was sentenced to 3 years probation, during which he will be subject to behavioral conditions under the supervision of the U.S. Department of Probation.

U.S. Attorney Colantuono stated: "This case exemplifies this Office's commitment to the New England Organized Crime Drug Enforcement Task Force, and the aggressive prosecution of crimes related to all forms of illegal drug trafficking, and the transportation of cocaine into New Hampshire across the Massachusetts border in particular. The cooperative efforts of the DEA, ATF, N.H. Attorney General's Drug Task Force, and the N.H. State Police, coordinated and funded in this case by the OCDETF program, have made the Lakes Region a safer place to live. My Office will continue to participate in the OCDETF program, seeking to reduce the drug supply in the State of New Hampshire."

Special Agent in Charge of the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives Boston Field Division William J. Hoover stated, "Today's actions dismantle a very well organized cocaine trafficking operation. Members of that organization now face many years in jail. Their lives will never be the same. But the quality of life for the people in the Lakes Region will be enhanced with these people off the street. Others involved with guns, drugs and violence should think hard about what happened today. They could be next."

"The conviction of these defendants shows the strength of the New England Organized Crime Drug Enforcement Task Force (OCDETF). This investigation demonstrates what can be accomplished when the resources of OCDETF are used to target large scale drug trafficking organizations," said DEA Special Agent in Charge Trouville. "This investigation went from Belmont, New Hampshire to the source of supply in Chelsea, Massachusetts and is example of how DEA and our law enforcement partners work an investigation to its highest level."

“This highly successful investigation and prosecution illustrates the benefits that can be achieved when the resources of local, state, and federal law enforcement law enforcement agencies are joined to combat narcotics trafficking in New Hampshire,” stated New Hampshire Attorney General Peter Heed.

“I believe that the commitment and teamwork on all levels enhanced the investigation and eventually the outcome of this case. This is a classic case of teamwork by many agencies that resulted in drug dealers taken off our streets,” stated Belmont Police Chief Vinnie Baiocchetti.

The prosecution is being handled by Assistant United States Attorneys Joseph N. Laplante, the Lead Attorney for the District of New Hampshire in the New England Organized Crime Drug Enforcement Task Force (“New England OCDETF”) and Rob Rabuck of the Civil Division’s Asset Forfeiture Section.

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